REMARKS

Claims 3, 4, 14, 15, 25, 26, 32, 46, 47, 57, and 58 are currently pending in this application. Claim 26 has been amended. The status of the application in light of the Office Action mailed July 15, 2005, is as follows:

(A)   Claims 3, 4, 14, 15, 25, 32, 46, 47, 57, and 58 are allowed.

(B)   Claim 26 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,664,990 ("Adams").

A.   Allowed Claims

The undersigned wishes to thank the Examiner for allowing claims 3, 4, 14, 15, 25, 32, 46, 47, 57, and 58. These claims have not been changed, and thus the status of these claims should not be changed.

B.   Response to Section 102 Rejection

Claim 26 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Adams. As described below, the rejection of amended claims 26 should be withdrawn because Adams does not disclose or suggest all of the features of this claim.

(1)   Claim 26 is Directed to Planarizing Machine with a Weir Positioned Over at Least a Portion of a Processing Pad

Claim 26 is directed toward a planarizing machine that includes a table having a support surface and a processing pad on the support surface. The machine further includes a carrier assembly having a head configured to hold a microelectronic workpiece and a drive assembly carrying the head. The machine still further includes a solution dispenser having an elongated weir over which a planarizing solution can flow. The weir can be spaced apart from the processing pad and positioned over at least a portion of the processing pad.

(2)   Adams Discloses a CMP Apparatus Having a Catch Ring
        That is Part of or Attached to a Perimeter of a Polishing Pad

Adams discloses a CMP apparatus that has a carrier and a polishing pad (col. 5, lines 51-61). The carrier holds and rotates a semiconductor wafer, while pressing the semiconductor wafer against the rotating polishing pad (col. 5, lines 51-61). A slurry is applied to the pad and flows outward as the wafer is polished (col. 5, lines 51-61). The slurry continues to flow outward from the perimeter of the pad and is caught in a trough of a catch ring (col. 5, lines 51-61). The catch ring "is part of or attached to the perimeter of the pad" (col. 5, lines 51-61). A portion of the fluid in the trough is picked up by a pickup tube and reapplied to the polishing pad (col. 6, line 24 – col. 7, line 1).

(3)   Adams Fails to Disclose, Among Other Features, a Weir
        Being Spaced Apart From the Processing Pad and
        Positioned Over at Least a Portion of the Processing Pad

Adams fails to disclose or suggest the combination of elements set forth in amended claim 26. For example, Adams does not disclose a weir spaced apart from the pad, but rather Adams discloses a trough that is part of or attached to the perimeter of the polishing pad to collect run-off slurry. Moreover, if Adams were modified to space the trough apart from the pad, the purpose of Adams's trough would be destroyed because it would not collect the run-off slurry. Additionally, the trough in Adams extends around the perimeter of the polishing pad and is not positioned over at least a portion of the processing pad as recited in claim 26. For at least these reasons, claim 26 is patentable over Adams.

In view of the foregoing, the pending claims comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112 and are patentable over the applied art. The applicant accordingly requests reconsideration of the application and a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned representative at (206) 359-6477.

No fees are believed due with this communication. However, the Commissioner is hereby authorized and requested to charge any deficiency in fees herein to Deposit Account No. 50-0665.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 17 October 2005

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